Constitution of PLEXUS

A Group for LGBT+ students of the OU Students Association, Alumni and Staff members of the Open University
## Version Control

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1 Name

1.1 The name of the Group shall be Open University PLEXUS (referred to hereafter as the Group).
1.2 The name PLEXUS shall be the operating name of the Group.
1.3 Pride, Learning, Equality, No eXcuses, Unity and Safety are the further explanation of what PLEXUS represents and are used in conjunction with the name of the Group.

2 Mission

2.1 PLEXUS is devoted to providing support and promoting equality to LGBT+ students, staff and alumni of the Open University.

3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 To provide a safe space, contact and support: for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans*, people associated with the Open University Student Association and Open University.
3.1.1 To be a collective voice representing people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans*. Where required, be a voice campaigning for equality/equity of these minorities and oppose any organisation, individual(s) or forces in society, which seek to foster divisions based on sexuality, class, religion, belief, gender, age, disability, race, creed or HIV status within the OU Student environment.

4 Membership

4.1 Full membership shall be open to those self-defining as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans* and who are current members of the OU Students Association as defined in section 12 the Student Association’s Constitution.
4.2 Associate membership shall be given to self-defining Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* alumni or staff members of the Open University.
4.3 Friends of the Group status shall be given to all members who wish to join the Group and are not defined in points 4.1 and 4.2.
4.4 Honorary Life Membership shall be given to members who have ceased to be eligible for Full Membership in recognition of their work for and on behalf of the Group.
4.4.1 Honorary Life Members will be able to fully participate in activity conducted by the Group but will be ineligible to stand in any future elections, whether or not they become eligible as per point 4.1
4.5 Membership can be refused those who are opposed to the overall mission, aims and objectives of the Group.
4.6 All members will be treated with dignity, respect and have a right to be heard.
4.6.1 The tiered membership structure exists for the governance and official business of the Group; structuring the aims, objectives and activities to ensure adequate representation, and meeting the needs of current students who identify as per section 3.1.
5 Governance

5.1 The governing body and sole policy-making body of the Group shall be the General Meeting consisting of all members of the Group who choose to attend. The quorum for General Meetings shall be at least twenty-five Full Members, and the Committee.

5.2 The affairs of the Group shall be administered between the General Meeting by the Committee.

5.3 Notice of General Meetings shall be given to all members not less than 28 days in advance of such meetings. Publication shall be made on the website, newsletter, social media platforms and Virtual Learning Environment Forums.

5.4 All enquiries shall be addressed to the Secretary of the committee to obtain details of the General Meeting's business.

5.5 All Full members of the Group are entitled to speak and vote on any matter of business before [in writing] and during a General Meeting.

5.6 Associate members, Friends of the Group and Honorary Life Members are able to speak on any matter of business before [in writing] and during a General Meeting but are unable to vote.

5.7 Minutes of all General Meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and will be available online through the website. Copies will be made available for inspection within 20 days following the meeting.

5.8 There shall be an Annual General Meeting which is conducted face-to-face and via the Virtual Learning Environment as noted in section 9.

5.8.1 There shall be an opportunity for eligible members to contribute and if applicable vote on matters of business prior to and within 3 calendar days after the close of the General Meeting.

5.9 Formal notification of an Annual General Meeting will be the same as section 5.3.

5.10 There shall be an Annual General Meeting every twelve months without another having been called less than 11 months and more than 15 months since the previous Annual General Meeting.

5.11 An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the Committee or at the request of not less than thirty-three percent (33%) of the Full members of the Group made in writing to the Secretary. Such requests shall specify the business for which the meeting is to be called. Upon receipt of such request the Secretary shall within 28 days give notice of the meeting to the Group. EGMs shall be subject to sections 5.3 to 5.9. The agenda for an EGM shall comprise only the business for which the meeting has been called.

5.12 Funding for PLEXUS shall be provided by the OU Student Association Board of Trustees on an annual basis

5.12.1 Any expenditure must be approved by the Chair and the Head of Student Community

5.12.2 Any request for additional funding can be applied for using the pre-existing conditions of the OU Students Association

5.12.3 The expenditure of PLEXUS shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting for illustrative purposes only
6 Officers and Committee

6.1 The Committee of the Group shall consist of five officers, five Community representative members. The quorum for committee meetings shall be four members, one of which must be an officer.

6.2 The Officers of the Group shall be:

6.2.1 Chair
6.2.2 Secretary
6.2.3 Campaigns
6.2.4 Equalities & Support
6.2.5 Women's

6.3 The Community Representatives are those members who self-define as a representative of their caucus and shall only be co-opted by members of that caucus.

6.4 The Community Representatives are:

6.4.1 Trans*
6.4.2 Disabled Students
6.4.3 Black & Minority Ethnic
6.4.4 Young Students
6.4.5 Bisexual Students

6.5 The Vice-President Equal Opportunities of the OU Students Association shall be invited to committee meetings but does not have voting privileges.

6.6 The Chair of the LGBT Staff Network shall be invited to the committee meetings but does not have voting privileges.

6.7 The PLEXUS dedicated VLE Forum Moderator shall be invited to the committee meetings but does not have voting privileges.

6.8 Officers shall normally be elected in Autumn biennially and shall hold office as noted in 6.9.

6.8.1 Notification of elections shall be presented by the Vice-President Equal Opportunities or their representative on behalf of the Group 8 weeks prior to the date of the ballot.

6.8.2 Nominations are due three weeks after the announcement, limited to 500 words. The Vice-President Equal Opportunities or their representative shall reject any nominations from candidates who are not Full members of the Group or have gone over the word count by the closing date.

6.8.3 Hustings shall be conducted online in a special forum thread on the OU Students Association Virtual Learning Environment.

6.8.4 Results of the Elections shall be announced within 8 weeks after the close of the ballot by the Vice-President Equal Opportunities or their representative.

6.9 The term of office shall be two years.

6.9.1 The 2016/2017 committee shall be selected through co-option due to the infancy of the Group and the previous LGBT+ Society committee.

6.9.2 The first set of elections shall take place in Autumn 2017

6.10 Only full members of the Group are eligible to nominate or be nominated for posts on the Committee. Ballots shall be cast using Simple Majority Voting system. Those wishing to stand in an election shall require a proposer and seconder.

6.11 Members shall not be permitted to hold an Officer or Supporting Officer position for more than 2 terms of office.
6.12 Members shall not be permitted to hold a Community Representative position for more than 2 terms of office.

6.13 In instances of where there are no nominations received or successful candidates elected the current Committee term of office may be extended or an interim Committee can be formed with preference going to the Officer Roles.

6.14 Where a vacancy arises within the Committee, the Committee may at its discretion may leave the position vacant until the next election period, or co-opt from amongst the full membership of the Group. The Committee will only have the power to co-opt three positions within any term of office.

6.15 The President, Deputy President and Vice-Presidents and the Student Representative to Council of the OU Students Association Central Executive Committee (CEC) are unable to hold an any position within the Group whilst they are serving members of the CEC.

6.16 Area Association Representative and Faculty Area Representative roles OU Students Association Central Executive Committee (CEC) are unable to hold an any Officer position within the Group whilst they are serving members of the CEC.

6.16.1 If Committee members were to be elected to the CEC their position would become vacant at the point of their term of office commencing and the committee shall enact section 6.14.

7 Pronouns

7.1 Due to the nature and membership of the Group it is prudent to recognise that individuals may wish to define their preferred pronoun reference.

7.2 Members have the right to define their preferred pronoun at the point of registering their membership.

7.3 All members are able to amend their preferred pronoun at any time by giving formal notification to the Secretary who will update their membership record

7.4 Committee members are to include their preferred pronoun within their signature of all outgoing communications.

7.5 All members should respect the preferred pronoun and method of personal reference.

8 Community Representatives

8.1 The Group shall have a number of representative caucuses with an elected representative as indicated in section 6.3.

8.2 The Caucuses are governed by all clauses set in this Constitution and the OU Students Association Constitution and bye-laws.

8.3 The Caucuses are a safe space for individuals to discuss issues or share ideas relevant to their own demographic.

8.4 Caucuses provide advice and guidance to the Committee through their elected representative or, in the case of no representative, the Secretary.

9 Annual General Meeting

9.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Summer annually, usually in July, with the date decided by the Group’s Committee.
9.2 The Annual General Meeting shall receive an Annual Report from the Committee and Financial Statements, and shall determine policy and activities for the year ahead.

10 OU Students Association Constitution and Bye Laws

10.1 The Group shall be governed by the Constitution and bye-laws of the OU Students Association.

11 Chair’s Ruling

11.1 The Chair shall rule upon any matter on which the Constitution is silent, ambiguous or otherwise requires interpretation.

12 Changes to the Constitution

12.1 This constitution may be changed only by a resolution supported by at least two-thirds of the Full Members present and voting at an AGM of the Group. All Full Members are entitled to vote by proxy in writing (through the Secretary) if they are unable to attend the meeting and wish to vote at the AGM. This must be received by the Secretary two full weeks beforehand.

12.2 Proposed changes to the Constitution must be notified in writing not less than ten weeks before the AGM at which they will be discussed.

12.3 Changes to the Constitution shall be notified in writing to all membership of the Group. Each notification may be published in a newsletter and other publications sent out.

13 Adoption of the Constitution

13.1 This constitution was adopted at a meeting of PLEXUS held on 24th January 2017.

Chairs Signature

[Signature]

13.2 This constitution was ratified by the Open University Students Association Vice-President Administration on 28th January 2017.

Vice-President Administration Signature

[Signature]